REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-14 and 23-30 are currently pending in this application. Claims 3, 5, 9-12, 24, and 28-29 are withdrawn from further consideration. It is submitted that the withdrawn claims should be reconsidered and reintroduced into the application when the independent claims from which they depend are found allowable.

Independent claims 1 and 23 have been amended in this response. Claims 14 and 30 have been cancelled. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the application as originally filed, specifically in paragraph 0027 of the specification as originally filed. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

II. RECORDATION OF PHONE INTERVIEW

The Examiner is thanked for granting Applicants' attorneys a phone interview on December 12, 2007. Participants in the interview included Examiner Andrew Piziali and Applicans' representatives Ronald Santucci and Vivek Shankam. The rejections to the claims in the Office Action mailed on October 15, 2007 and the references cited therein were discussed. The Applicants discussed possible amendments to distinguish the claims over the cited art, to which the Examiner agreed that amendments of this type would appear to overcome the art of record.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§102 & 103

Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 23, and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,110,905 to Rhodes.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 23 and 25-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,595,627 to Steinman.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 23 and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,883,022 to Elsener.

Claims 1, 6, 13, 14, 23, 25-27 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,345,730 to Luvelink.

Claims 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Rhodes in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,465,761 to Gheysen or U.S. Patent No. 6,457,489 to Smissaert.

Claims 1, 6, 13, 14, 23, 25-27 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,142,752 to Greenway in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,345,730 to Luvelink. The rejections are traversed for the following reasons:

Independent claim 1 recites:

> "A hydroentangling support fabric for use in a hydroentangling device for the production of a hydroentangled nonwoven product, said support fabric comprising flat filaments and wherein said support fabric is <u>in a continuous loop or made endless</u>." (Emphasis added)

Therefore, the support fabric of the instant invention is in a continuous loop or made endless that includes flat filaments. Additionally, the instant fabric is used in a hydroentangling device for the production of a hydroentangled nonwoven product, wherein flat monofilaments promote greater reflective water flow, and therefore greater reflective entanglement energy. By promoting greater reflective entanglement energy, the fabric promotes greater entanglement of the fibers making up the nonwoven, and thereby provides for a stronger finished nonwoven.

In other words, when water is directed at the fabric in a direction perpendicular, or substantially perpendicular to the plane in which the flattened yarns lie, some water will reflect off the support fabric, and further entangle the fibers. In particular, the invention reduces entangling of fibers to the fabric surface itself and improves reflection (or "flashback") of water jets. Furthermore, the invention improves release of the fiber web from the hydroentangling fabric after entangling and improves MD/CD tensile ratios. More specifically, tests have shown that release of the fiber web from the hydroentangling fabric improves such that the draw is reduced from about 8% to 0%, and that the MD/CD ratio improvement is about 10% to 40%. *Instant Application*, paragraphs 0031, 0032 and 0039.

As understood by the Applicants Rhodes relates to a tufted pile fabric for use in floor coverings or carpets.

As understood by the Applicants Steinman relates to a textile material or textile fabric for use in garments for providing safety to the wearer when walking, jogging or cycling in the night.

As understood by the Applicants Elsener relates to a textile fabric for use in clinical areas or clean rooms.

As understood by the Applicants Luvelink relates to a spiral link fabric for use in a papermaking machine

As understood by the Applicants Greenway relates to a method for producing nonwovens or a system for producing nonwoven fabrics.

Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references, considered either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the above identified feature of claim 1. Specifically, none of the cited references, considered either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a support fabric for use in a hydroentangling device comprising flat filaments wherein the support fabric is in a continuous loop or made endless, as recited in independent claim 1.

As to the combination of Greenway and Luvelink, Applicants respectfully submit that Greenway does not teach any structure to its conveyor belt. On the other hand, Luvelink has no relation to nonwoven production or the belts used in nonwoven production, let alone using a woven belt as claimed in hydroentangling. In fact, Luvelink does not teach or suggest any structure other than a spiral link fabric.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited references, and therefore should be allowed. Since claim 23 is similar in scope, independent claim 23 is also patentable over the cited references, considered either alone or in combination.

Dependent claims 2, 4, 6-8, 13 and 25-27 depend from either claim 1 or claim 23 discussed above, and are therefore patentable for similar reasons.

In the event that the Examiner disagrees with any of the foregoing comments concerning the disclosures in the cited prior art, it is requested that the Examiner indicate where in the reference, there is the basis for a contrary view.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable over the prior art, and early and favorable consideration thereof is solicited.

Please charge any fees incurred by reason of this response and not paid herewith to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number provided below. The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,
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By: _____

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